

# History of Anglo-Saxon England

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**Anglo-Saxon England** was early medieval England, existing from the 5th to the 11th centuries from the end of Roman Britain until the Norman conquest in 1066. It consisted of various Anglo-Saxon kingdoms until 927 when it was united as the Kingdom of England by King Æthelstan (r. 927–939). It became part of the short-lived North Sea Empire of Cnut the Great, a personal union between England, Denmark and Norway in the 11th century.

The Anglo-Saxons were the members of Germanic-speaking groups who migrated to the southern half of the island of Great Britain from nearby northwestern Europe. Anglo-Saxon history thus begins during the period of sub-Roman Britain following the end of Roman control, and traces the establishment of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in the 5th and 6th centuries (conventionally identified as seven main kingdoms: Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Essex, Kent, Sussex, and Wessex), their Christianisation during the 7th century, the threat of Viking invasions and Danish settlers, the gradual unification of England under the Wessex hegemony during the 9th and 10th centuries, and ending with the Norman conquest of England by William the Conqueror in 1066.

Anglo-Saxon identity survived beyond the Norman conquest,<sup>[1]</sup> came to be known as Englishry under Norman rule, and through social and cultural integration with Celts, Danes and Anglo-Normans became the modern English people.

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## Terminology

Bede completed his book *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (Ecclesiastical History of the English People) in around 731. Thus the term for English people (Latin: *gens Anglorum*; Anglo-Saxon: *Anglecynn*) was in use by then to distinguish Germanic groups in Britain from those on the continent (Old Saxony in Northern Germany).<sup>[1][a]</sup> The term 'Anglo-Saxon' came into use in the 8th century (probably by Paul the Deacon) to distinguish English Saxons from continental Saxons (Ealdseaxe, 'old' Saxons).

The historian James Campbell suggested that it was not until the late Anglo-Saxon period that England could be described as a nation state.<sup>[2]</sup> It is certain that the concept of "Englishness" only developed very slowly.<sup>[3][4]</sup>

## Historical context

As the Roman occupation of Britain was coming to an end, Constantine III withdrew the remains of the army in reaction to the Germanic invasion of Gaul with the Crossing of the Rhine in December 406.<sup>[5][6]</sup> The Romano-British leaders were faced with an increasing security problem from seaborne raids, particularly by Picts on the east coast of England.<sup>[7]</sup> The expedient adopted by the Romano-British leaders was to enlist the help of Anglo-Saxon mercenaries (known as *foederati*), to whom they ceded territory.<sup>[7][8]</sup> In about 442 the Anglo-Saxons mutinied, apparently because they had not been paid.<sup>[9]</sup> The Romano-British responded by appealing to the Roman commander of the Western empire, Aëtius, for help (a document known as the *Groans of the Britons*), even though Honorius, the Western Roman Emperor, had written to the British *civitas* in or about 410 telling them to look to their own defence.<sup>[10][11][12][13]</sup> There then followed several years of fighting between the British and the Anglo-Saxons.<sup>[14]</sup> The fighting continued until around 500, when, at the Battle of Mount Badon, the Britons inflicted a severe defeat on the Anglo-Saxons.<sup>[15]</sup>

## Migration and the formation of kingdoms (400–600)

There are records of Germanic infiltration into Britain that date before the collapse of the Roman Empire.<sup>[16]</sup> It is believed that the earliest Germanic visitors were eight cohorts of Batavians attached to the 14th Legion in the original invasion force under Aulus Plautius in AD 43.<sup>[16][17][18]</sup> There is a recent hypothesis that some of the native tribes, identified as Britons by the Romans, may have been Germanic-language speakers, but most scholars disagree with this due to an insufficient record of local languages in Roman-period artefacts.<sup>[19][20][21]</sup>

It was quite common for Rome to swell its legions with *foederati* recruited from the German homelands.<sup>[22]</sup> This practice also extended to the army serving in Britain, and graves of these mercenaries, along with their families, can be identified in the Roman cemeteries of the period.<sup>[23]</sup> The migration continued with the departure of the Roman army, when Anglo-Saxons were recruited to defend Britain; and also during the period of the Anglo-Saxon first rebellion of 442.<sup>[24]</sup>



2nd to 5th century simplified migration patterns.

If the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is to be believed, the various Anglo-Saxon kingdoms which eventually merged to become England were founded when small fleets of three or five ships of invaders arrived at various points around the coast of England to fight the sub-Roman British, and conquered their lands.<sup>[25]</sup> The language of the migrants, Old English, came over the next few centuries to predominate throughout what is now England, at the expense of British Celtic and British Latin.



Map of Briton settlements in the 6th century.<sup>[26]</sup>

The arrival of the Anglo-Saxons into Britain can be seen in the context of a general movement of Germanic peoples around Europe between the years 300 and 700, known as the Migration period (also called the Barbarian Invasions or Völkerwanderung). In the same period there were migrations of Britons to the Armorican peninsula (Brittany and Normandy in modern-day France): initially around 383 during Roman rule, but also c. 460 and in the 540s and 550s; the 460s migration is thought to be a reaction to the fighting during the Anglo-Saxon mutiny between about 450 to 500, as was the migration to Britonia (modern day Galicia, in northwest Spain) at about the same time.<sup>[26]</sup> The historian Peter Hunter-Blair expounded what is now regarded as the traditional view of the Anglo-Saxon arrival in Britain.<sup>[27]</sup> He suggested a mass immigration, fighting and driving the sub-Roman Britons off their land and into the western extremities of the islands, and into the Breton and Iberian peninsulas.<sup>[28]</sup> This view was probably influenced by sources such as Bede, where he talks about the Britons being slaughtered or going into "perpetual servitude".<sup>[29]</sup> According to Härke the more modern view is of co-existence between the British and the Anglo-Saxons.<sup>[30][31][32]</sup> He suggests that several modern archaeologists have now re-assessed the invasion model, and have developed a co-existence model largely based on the Laws of Ine. The laws include several clauses that provide six different wergild levels for

the Britons, of which four are below that of freeman.<sup>[33]</sup> Although it was possible for the Britons to be rich freemen in Anglo-Saxon society, generally it seems that they had a lower status than that of the Anglo-Saxons.<sup>[32][33]</sup>

Discussions and analysis still continue on the size of the migration, and whether it was a small elite band of Anglo-Saxons who came in and took over the running of the country, or a mass migration of peoples who overwhelmed the Britons.<sup>[34][35][36][37]</sup>

According to Gildas, initial vigorous British resistance was led by a man called Ambrosius Aurelianus,<sup>[38]</sup> from which time victory fluctuated between the two peoples. Gildas records a "final" victory of the Britons at the Battle of Mount Badon in c. 500, and this might mark a point at which Anglo-Saxon migration was temporarily stemmed.<sup>[15]</sup> Gildas said that this battle was "forty-four years and one month" after the arrival of the Saxons, and was also the year of his birth.<sup>[15]</sup> He said that a time of great prosperity followed.<sup>[15]</sup> But, despite the lull, the Anglo-Saxons took control of Sussex, Kent, East Anglia and part of Yorkshire; while the West Saxons founded a kingdom in Hampshire under the leadership of Cerdic, around 520.<sup>[39]</sup> However, it was to be 50 years before the Anglo-Saxons began further major advances.<sup>[39]</sup> In the intervening years the Britons exhausted themselves with civil war, internal disputes, and general unrest, which was the inspiration behind Gildas's book *De Excidio Britanniae* (The Ruin of Britain).<sup>[40]</sup>

The next major campaign against the Britons was in 577, led by Cealin, king of Wessex, whose campaigns succeeded in taking Cirencester, Gloucester and Bath (known as the Battle of Dyrham).<sup>[39][41][42]</sup> This expansion of Wessex ended abruptly when the Anglo-Saxons started fighting among themselves and resulted in Cealin retreating to his original territory. He was then replaced by Ceol (who was possibly his

nephew). Cealin was killed the following year, but the annals do not specify by whom.<sup>[43][44]</sup> Cirencester subsequently became an Anglo-Saxon kingdom under the overlordship of the Mercians, rather than Wessex.<sup>[45]</sup>

## Heptarchy and Christianisation (7th and 8th centuries)

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By 600, a new order was developing, of kingdoms and sub-Kingdoms. The medieval historian Henry of Huntingdon conceived the idea of the Heptarchy, which consisted of the seven principal Anglo-Saxon kingdoms (*Heptarchy* literal translation from the Greek: *hept* – seven; *archy* – rule).<sup>[46]</sup>

### Anglo-Saxon England heptarchy

The four main kingdoms in Anglo-Saxon England were:

- East Anglia
- Mercia
- Northumbria, including sub-kingdoms Bernicia and Deira
- Wessex

Minor kingdoms:

- Essex
- Kent
- Sussex

### Other minor kingdoms and territories

- Haestingas
- Hwicce
- Kingdom of the Iclingas, a precursor state to Mercia
- Isle of Wight, (Wihtwara)
- Lindsey
- Magonsæte
- Meonwara, the Meon Valley area of Hampshire
- Pecsæte
- Surrey
- Tomsæte
- Wreocensæte



Anglo-Saxon and British kingdoms  
c. 800

At the end of the 6th century the most powerful ruler in England was Æthelberht of Kent, whose lands extended north to the River Humber.<sup>[47]</sup> In the early years of the 7th century, Kent and East Anglia were the leading English kingdoms.<sup>[48]</sup> After the death of Æthelberht in 616, Rædwald of East Anglia became the most powerful leader south of the Humber.<sup>[48]</sup>

Following the death of Æthelfrith of Northumbria, Rædwald provided military assistance to the Deiran Edwin in his struggle to take over the two dynasties of Deira and Bernicia in the unified kingdom of Northumbria.<sup>[48]</sup> Upon the death of Rædwald, Edwin was able to pursue a grand plan to expand Northumbrian power.<sup>[48]</sup>

The growing strength of Edwin of Northumbria forced the Anglo-Saxon Mercians under Penda into an alliance with the Welsh King Cadwallon ap Cadfan of Gwynedd, and together they invaded Edwin's lands and defeated and killed him at the Battle of Hatfield Chase in 633.<sup>[49][50]</sup> Their success was short-lived, as Oswald (one of the sons of the late King of Northumbria, Æthelfrith) defeated and killed Cadwallon at Heavenfield near Hexham.<sup>[51]</sup> In less than a decade Penda again waged war against Northumbria, and killed Oswald in the Battle of Maserfield in 642.<sup>[52]</sup>

His brother Oswiu was chased to the northern extremes of his kingdom.<sup>[52][53]</sup> However, Oswiu killed Penda shortly after, and Mercia spent the rest of the 7th and all of the 8th century fighting the kingdom of Powys.<sup>[52]</sup> The war reached its climax during the reign of Offa of Mercia,<sup>[52]</sup> who is remembered for the construction of a 150-mile-long dyke which formed the Wales/England border.<sup>[54]</sup> It is not clear whether this was a boundary line or a defensive position.<sup>[54]</sup> The ascendancy of the Mercians came to an end in 825, when they were soundly beaten under Beornwulf at the Battle of Ellendun by Egbert of Wessex.<sup>[55]</sup>

Christianity had been introduced into the British Isles during the Roman occupation.<sup>[56]</sup> The early Christian Berber author, Tertullian, writing in the 3rd century, said that "Christianity could *even* be found in Britain."<sup>[57]</sup> The Roman Emperor Constantine (306–337), granted official tolerance to Christianity with the Edict of Milan in 313.<sup>[58]</sup> Then, in the reign of Emperor Theodosius "the Great" (378–395), Christianity was made the official religion of the Roman Empire.<sup>[59]</sup>



Silver coin of Aldfrith of Northumbria (686–705). OBVERSE: +AldFRIDUS, pellet-in-annulet; REVERSE: Lion with forked tail standing left.



Escomb Church, a restored 7th century Anglo-Saxon church. Church architecture and artefacts provide a useful source of historical information.

It is not entirely clear how many Britons would have been Christian when the pagan Anglo-Saxons arrived.<sup>[60][61]</sup> There had been attempts to evangelise the Irish by Pope Celestine I in 431.<sup>[62]</sup> However, it was Saint Patrick who is credited with converting the Irish en-masse.<sup>[62]</sup> A Christian Ireland then set about evangelising the rest of the British Isles, and Columba was sent to found a religious community in Iona, off the west coast of Scotland.<sup>[63]</sup> Then Aidan was sent from Iona to set up his see in Northumbria, at Lindisfarne, between 635–651.<sup>[64]</sup> Hence Northumbria was converted by the Celtic (Irish) church.<sup>[64]</sup>

Bede is very uncomplimentary about the indigenous British clergy: in his *Historia ecclesiastica* he complains of their "unspeakable crimes", and that they

did not preach the faith to the Angles or Saxons.<sup>[65]</sup> Pope Gregory I sent Augustine in 597 to convert the Anglo-Saxons, but Bede says the British clergy refused to help Augustine in his mission.<sup>[66][67]</sup> Despite Bede's complaints, it is now believed that the Britons played an important role in the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons.<sup>[68]</sup> On arrival in the south east of England in 597, Augustine was given land by King Æthelberht of Kent to build a church; so in 597 Augustine built the church and founded the See at Canterbury.<sup>[69]</sup> Æthelberht was baptised by 601, and he then continued with his mission to convert the English.<sup>[70]</sup> Most of the north and east of England had already been evangelised by the Irish Church. However, Sussex and the Isle of Wight remained mainly pagan until the arrival of Saint Wilfrid, the exiled Archbishop of York, who converted Sussex around 681 and the Isle of Wight in 683.<sup>[71][72][73]</sup>



It remains unclear what "conversion" actually meant. The ecclesiastical writers tended to declare a territory as "converted" merely because the local king had agreed to be baptised, regardless of whether, in reality, he actually adopted Christian practices; and regardless, too, of whether the general population of his kingdom did.<sup>[74]</sup> When churches were built, they tended to include pagan as well as Christian symbols, evidencing an attempt to reach out to the pagan Anglo-Saxons, rather than demonstrating that they were already converted.<sup>[75][76]</sup>



Whitby Abbey

Even after Christianity had been set up in all of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, there was friction between the followers of the Roman rites and the Irish rites, particularly over the date on which Easter fell and the way monks cut their hair.<sup>[77]</sup> In 664 a conference was held at Whitby Abbey (known as the Whitby Synod) to decide the matter; Saint Wilfrid was an advocate for the Roman rites and Bishop Colmán for the Irish rites.<sup>[78]</sup> Wilfrid's argument won the day and Colmán and his party returned to Ireland in their bitter disappointment.<sup>[78]</sup> The Roman rites were adopted by the English church, although they were not universally accepted by the Irish Church.<sup>[78]</sup>

## Viking challenge and the rise of Wessex (9th century)

Between the 8th and 11th centuries, raiders and colonists from Scandinavia, mainly Danish and Norwegian, plundered western Europe, including the British Isles.<sup>[79]</sup> These raiders came to be known as the Vikings; the name is believed to derive from Scandinavia, where the Vikings originated.<sup>[80][81]</sup> The first raids in the British Isles were in the late 8th century, mainly on churches and monasteries (which were seen as centres of wealth).<sup>[80][82]</sup> The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle reports that the holy island of Lindisfarne was sacked in 793.<sup>[83]</sup> The raiding then virtually stopped for around 40 years; but in about 835, it started becoming more regular.<sup>[84]</sup>



Map of England in 878 showing the extent of the Danelaw.

In the 860s, instead of raids, the Danes mounted a full-scale invasion. In 865, an enlarged army arrived that the Anglo-Saxons described as the Great Heathen Army. This was reinforced in 871 by the Great Summer Army.<sup>[84]</sup> Within ten years nearly all of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms fell to the invaders: Northumbria in 867, East Anglia in 869, and nearly all of Mercia in 874–77.<sup>[84]</sup> Kingdoms, centres of learning, archives, and churches all fell before the onslaught from the invading Danes. Only the Kingdom of Wessex was able to survive.<sup>[84]</sup> In March 878, the Anglo-Saxon King of Wessex, Alfred, with a few men, built a fortress at Athelney, hidden deep in the marshes of Somerset.<sup>[86]</sup> He used this as a base from which to harry the Vikings. In May 878 he put together an army formed from the populations of Somerset, Wiltshire, and Hampshire, which defeated the Viking army in the Battle of Edington.<sup>[86]</sup> The Vikings retreated to their stronghold, and Alfred laid siege to it.<sup>[86]</sup> Ultimately the Danes capitulated, and their leader Guthrum agreed to withdraw from Wessex and to be baptised. The formal ceremony was completed a few days later at Wedmore.<sup>[86][87]</sup> There followed a peace treaty between Alfred and Guthrum, which had a variety of provisions, including defining the boundaries of the area to be ruled by the Danes (which became known as the Danelaw) and those of Wessex.<sup>[88]</sup> The Kingdom of Wessex controlled part of the Midlands and the whole of the South (apart from Cornwall, which was still held by the Britons), while the Danes held East Anglia and the North.<sup>[89]</sup>

After the victory at Edington and resultant peace treaty, Alfred set about transforming his Kingdom of Wessex into a society on a full-time war footing.<sup>[90]</sup> He built a navy, reorganised the army, and set up a system of fortified towns known as burhs. He mainly used old Roman cities for his burhs, as he was able to rebuild and reinforce their existing fortifications.<sup>[90]</sup> To maintain the burhs, and the standing army, he set up a taxation system known as the Burghal Hidage.<sup>[91]</sup> These burhs (or burghs) operated as defensive structures. The Vikings were thereafter unable to cross large sections of Wessex: the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* reports that a Danish raiding party was defeated when it tried to attack the burh of Chichester.<sup>[92][93]</sup>

Although the *burhs* were primarily designed as defensive structures, they were also commercial centres, attracting traders and markets to a safe haven, and they provided a safe place for the king's moneyers and mints.<sup>[94]</sup> A new wave of Danish invasions commenced in 891,<sup>[95]</sup> beginning a war that lasted over three years.<sup>[96][97]</sup> Alfred's new system of defence worked, however, and ultimately it wore the Danes down: they gave up and dispersed in mid-896.<sup>[97]</sup>

Alfred is remembered as a literate king. He or his court commissioned the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which was written in Old English (rather than in Latin, the language of the European annals).<sup>[98]</sup> Alfred's own literary output was mainly of translations, but he also wrote introductions and amended manuscripts.<sup>[98][99]</sup>

## English unification (10th century)

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From 874–879 the western half of Mercia was ruled by Ceowulf II, who was succeeded by Æthelred.<sup>[100]</sup> In 886/887 Æthelred married Alfred's daughter Æthelflæd.<sup>[100]</sup>

On Alfred's death in 899, his son Edward the Elder succeeded him.<sup>[101]</sup> Edward, along with Alfred's grandsons Æthelstan, Edmund I, and Eadred, continued the policy of resistance against the Vikings.<sup>[102]</sup>

When Æthelred died in 911, his widow administered the Mercian province with the title "Lady of the Mercians".<sup>[100]</sup> As commander of the Mercian army she worked with her brother, Edward the Elder, to win back the Mercian lands that were under Danish control.<sup>[100]</sup> Edward and his successors expanded Alfred's network of fortified burhs, a key element of their strategy, enabling them to go on the offensive.<sup>[102][103]</sup> Edward recaptured Essex in 913. Edward's son, Æthelstan, annexed Northumbria and forced the kings of Wales to submit; at the Battle of Brunanburh in 937, he defeated an alliance of the Scots, Danes, and Vikings to become King of all England.<sup>[102][104]</sup>

Along with the Britons and the settled Danes, some of the other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms disliked being ruled by Wessex. Consequently, the death of a Wessex king would be followed by rebellion, particularly in Northumbria.<sup>[102]</sup> In 973, Alfred's great-grandson, Edgar, was crowned King of England and Emperor of



The walled defence round a burgh. Alfred's capital, Winchester. Saxon and medieval work on Roman foundations.<sup>[85]</sup>



Edgar's coinage

Britain at Bath.<sup>[105]</sup> On his coinage he had inscribed EADGAR REX ANGLORUM ("Edgar, King of the English"). Edgar's coronation was a magnificent affair, and many of its rituals and words could still be seen in the coronation of Elizabeth II in 1953, though in English rather than Latin.<sup>[106]</sup>

The presence of Danish and Norse settlers in the Danelaw had a lasting impact; the people there saw themselves as "armies" a hundred years after settlement:<sup>[107]</sup> King Edgar issued a law code in 962 that was to include the people of Northumbria, so he addressed it to Earl Olaf "and all the army that live in that earldom".<sup>[107]</sup> There are over 3,000 words in modern English that have Scandinavian roots,<sup>[108][109]</sup> and more than 1,500 place-names in England are Scandinavian in origin; for example, topographic names such as Howe, Norfolk and Howe, North Yorkshire are derived from the Old Norse word *haugr* meaning hill, knoll, or mound.<sup>[109][110]</sup> In archaeology and other academic contexts the term Anglo-Scandinavian is often used for Scandinavian culture in England.

## England under the Danes and the Norman conquest (978–1066)

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Viking longboat replica in Ramsgate, Kent

Two years after his coronation, Edgar died while still only in his early thirties. Some magnates supported the succession of his younger son, Æthelred, but his elder half-brother, Edward was elected, aged about twelve. His reign was marked by disorder, and three years later, in 978, he was assassinated by some of his half-brother's retainers.<sup>[111]</sup> Æthelred succeeded, and although he reigned for thirty-eight years, one of the longest reigns in English history, he earned the name "Æthelred the Unready", as he proved to be one of England's most disastrous kings.<sup>[112]</sup> William of Malmesbury, writing in his *Chronicle of the kings of England* about one hundred years later, was scathing in his criticism of Æthelred, saying that he occupied the kingdom, rather than governed it.<sup>[113]</sup>

Just as Æthelred was being crowned, the Danish King Gormsson was trying to force Christianity onto his domain.<sup>[114]</sup> Many of his subjects did not like this idea, and shortly before 988, Swein, his son, drove his father from the kingdom.<sup>[114]</sup> The rebels, dispossessed at home, probably formed the first waves of raids on the English coast.<sup>[114]</sup> The rebels did so well in their raiding that the Danish kings decided to take over the campaign themselves.<sup>[115]</sup>

In 991 the Vikings sacked Ipswich, and their fleet made landfall near Maldon in Essex.<sup>[115]</sup> The Danes demanded that the English pay a ransom, but the English commander Byrhtnoth refused; he was killed in the ensuing Battle of Maldon, and the English were easily defeated.<sup>[115]</sup> From then on the Vikings seem to have raided anywhere at will; they were contemptuous of the lack of resistance from the English. Even the Alfredian systems of burhs failed.<sup>[116]</sup> Æthelred seems to have just hidden, out of range of the raiders.<sup>[116]</sup>

### Payment of Danegeld

By the 980s the kings of Wessex had a powerful grip on the coinage of the realm. It is reckoned there were about 300 moneys, and 60 mints, around the country.<sup>[117]</sup> Every five or six years the coinage in circulation would cease to be legal tender and new coins were issued.<sup>[117]</sup> The system controlling the currency around the country was extremely sophisticated; this enabled the king to raise large sums of money if needed.<sup>[118][119]</sup> The need indeed arose after the battle of Maldon, as Æthelred decided that, rather than



fight, he would pay ransom to the Danes in a system known as Danegeld.<sup>[120]</sup> As part of the ransom, a peace treaty was drawn up that was intended to stop the raids. However, rather than buying the Vikings off, payment of Danegeld only encouraged them to come back for more.<sup>[121]</sup>

The Dukes of Normandy were quite happy to allow these Danish adventurers to use their ports for raids on the English coast. The result was that the courts of England and Normandy became increasingly hostile to each other.<sup>[114]</sup> Eventually, Æthelred sought a treaty with the Normans, and ended up marrying Emma, daughter of Richard I, Duke of Normandy in the Spring of 1002, which was seen as an attempt to break the link between the raiders and Normandy.<sup>[116][122]</sup>

Then, on St. Brice's day in November 1002, Danes living in England were slaughtered on the orders of Æthelred.<sup>[123]</sup>

## Rise of Cnut

In mid-1013, Sven Forkbeard, King of Denmark, brought the Danish fleet to Sandwich, Kent.<sup>[124]</sup> From there he went north to the Danelaw, where the locals immediately agreed to support him.<sup>[124]</sup> He then struck south, forcing Æthelred into exile in Normandy (1013–1014). However, on 3 February 1014, Sven died suddenly.<sup>[124]</sup> Capitalising on his death, Æthelred returned to England and drove Sven's son, Cnut, back to Denmark, forcing him to abandon his allies in the process.<sup>[124]</sup>

In 1015, Cnut launched a new campaign against England.<sup>[124]</sup> Edmund fell out with his father, Æthelred, and struck out on his own.<sup>[125]</sup> Some English leaders decided to support Cnut, so Æthelred ultimately retreated to London.<sup>[125]</sup> Before engagement with the Danish army, Æthelred died and was replaced by Edmund.<sup>[125]</sup> The Danish army encircled and besieged London, but Edmund was able to escape and raised an army of loyalists.<sup>[125]</sup> Edmund's army routed the Danes, but the success was short-lived: at the Battle of Ashington, the Danes were victorious, and many of the English leaders were killed.<sup>[125]</sup> Cnut and Edmund agreed to split the kingdom in two, with Edmund ruling Wessex and Cnut the rest.<sup>[125][126]</sup>

In 1017, Edmund died in mysterious circumstances, probably murdered by Cnut or his supporters, and the English council (the witan) confirmed Cnut as king of all England.<sup>[125]</sup> Cnut divided England into earldoms: most of these were allocated to nobles of Danish descent, but he made an Englishman earl of Wessex. The man he appointed was Godwin, who eventually became part of the extended royal family when he married the king's sister-in-law.<sup>[127]</sup> In the summer of 1017, Cnut sent for Æthelred's widow, Emma, with the intention of marrying her.<sup>[128]</sup> It seems that Emma agreed to marry the king on condition that he would limit the English succession to the children born of their union.<sup>[129]</sup> Cnut already had a wife, known as Ælfgifu of Northampton, who bore him two sons, Svein and Harold Harefoot.<sup>[129]</sup> The church, however, seems to have regarded Ælfgifu as Cnut's concubine rather than his wife.<sup>[129]</sup> In addition to the two sons he had with Ælfgifu, he had a further son with Emma, who was named Harthacnut.<sup>[129][130]</sup>

When Cnut's brother, Harald II, King of Denmark, died in 1018, Cnut went to Denmark to secure that realm. Two years later, Cnut brought Norway under his control, and he gave Ælfgifu and their son Svein the job of governing it.<sup>[130]</sup>



Cnut's dominions. The Norwegian lands of Jemtland, Herjedalen, Idre, and Særna are not included in this map.

## Edward becomes king

One result of Cnut's marriage to Emma was to precipitate a succession crisis after his death in 1035,<sup>[130]</sup> as the throne was disputed between Ælfifu's son, Harald Harefoot, and Emma's son, Harthacnut.<sup>[131]</sup> Emma supported her son by Cnut, Harthacnut, rather than a son by Æthelred.<sup>[132]</sup> Her son by Æthelred, Edward, made an unsuccessful raid on Southampton, and his brother Alfred was murdered on an expedition to England in 1036.<sup>[132]</sup> Emma fled to Bruges when Harald Harefoot became king of England, but when he died in 1040 Harthacnut was able to take over as king.<sup>[131]</sup> Harthacnut quickly developed a reputation for imposing high taxes on England.<sup>[131]</sup> He became so unpopular that Edward was invited to return from exile in Normandy to be recognised as Harthacnut's heir,<sup>[132][133]</sup> and when Harthacnut died suddenly in 1042 (probably murdered), Edward (known to posterity as Edward the Confessor) became king.<sup>[132]</sup>

Edward was supported by Earl Godwin of Wessex and married the earl's daughter. This arrangement was seen as expedient, however, as Godwin had been implicated in the murder of Alfred, the king's brother. In 1051 one of Edward's in-laws, Eustace, arrived to take up residence in Dover; the men of Dover objected and killed some of Eustace's men.<sup>[132]</sup> When Godwin refused to punish them, the king, who had been unhappy with the Godwins for some time, summoned them to trial. Stigand, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was chosen to deliver the news to Godwin and his family.<sup>[134]</sup> The Godwins fled rather than face trial.<sup>[134]</sup> Norman accounts suggest that at this time Edward offered the succession to his cousin, William (duke) of Normandy (also known as William the Conqueror, William the Bastard, or William I), though this is unlikely given that accession to the Anglo-Saxon kingship was by election, not heredity – a fact which Edward would surely have known, having been elected himself by the Witenagemot.

The Godwins, having previously fled, threatened to invade England. Edward is said to have wanted to fight, but at a Great Council meeting in Westminster, Earl Godwin laid down all his weapons and asked the king to allow him to purge himself of all crimes.<sup>[135]</sup> The king and Godwin were reconciled,<sup>[135]</sup> and the Godwins thus became the most powerful family in England after the king.<sup>[136][137]</sup> On Godwin's death in 1053, his son Harold succeeded to the earldom of Wessex; Harold's brothers Gyrth, Leofwine, and Tostig were given East Anglia, Mercia, and Northumbria.<sup>[136]</sup> The Northumbrians disliked Tostig for his harsh behaviour, and he was expelled to an exile in Flanders, in the process falling out with his brother Harold, who supported the king's line in backing the Northumbrians.<sup>[138][139]</sup>

## Death of Edward the Confessor

On 26 December 1065, Edward was taken ill.<sup>[139]</sup> He took to his bed and fell into a coma; at one point he woke and turned to Harold Godwinson and asked him to protect the Queen and the kingdom.<sup>[140][141]</sup> On 5 January 1066 Edward the Confessor died, and Harold was declared king.<sup>[139]</sup> The following day, 6 January 1066, Edward was buried and Harold crowned.<sup>[141][142]</sup>

Although Harold Godwinson had "grabbed" the crown of England, others laid claim to it, primarily William, Duke of Normandy, who was cousin to Edward the Confessor through his aunt, Emma of Normandy.<sup>[143]</sup> It is believed that Edward had promised the crown to William.<sup>[132]</sup> Harold Godwinson had agreed to support William's claim after being imprisoned in Normandy, by Guy of Ponthieu. William had demanded and received Harold's release, then during his stay under William's protection it is claimed, by the Normans, that Harold swore "a solemn oath" of loyalty to William.<sup>[144]</sup>

Harald Hardrada ("The Ruthless") of Norway also had a claim on England, through Cnut and his successors.<sup>[143]</sup> He had a further claim based on a pact between Harthacnut, King of Denmark (Cnut's son) and Magnus, King of Norway.<sup>[143]</sup>



St Bene't's Church of Cambridge, the oldest extant building in Cambridgeshire; its tower was built in the late Anglo-Saxon period.

Tostig, Harold's estranged brother, was the first to move; according to the medieval historian Orderic Vitalis, he travelled to Normandy to enlist the help of William, Duke of Normandy, later to be known as William the Conqueror.<sup>[143][144][145]</sup> William was not ready to get involved so Tostig sailed from the Cotentin Peninsula, but because of storms ended up in Norway, where he successfully enlisted the help of Harald Hardrada.<sup>[145][146]</sup> The *Anglo Saxon Chronicle* has a different version of the story, having Tostig land in the Isle of Wight in May 1066, then ravaging the English coast, before arriving at Sandwich, Kent.<sup>[142][146]</sup> At Sandwich Tostig is said to have enlisted and press ganged sailors before sailing north where, after battling some of the northern earls and also visiting Scotland, he eventually joined Hardrada (possibly in Scotland or at the mouth of the river Tyne).<sup>[142][146]</sup>

## Battle of Fulford and aftermath

According to the *Anglo Saxon Chronicle* (Manuscripts *D* and *E*) Tostig became Hadrada's vassal, and then with 300 or so longships sailed up the Humber Estuary bottling the English fleet in the river Swale and then landed at Riccall on the Ouse on 24 September.<sup>[146][147]</sup> They marched towards York, where they were confronted, at Fulford Gate, by the English forces

that were under the command of the northern earls, Edwin and Morcar; the battle of Fulford Gate followed, on 20 September, which was one of the bloodiest battles of medieval times.<sup>[148]</sup> The English forces were routed, though Edwin and Morcar escaped. The victors entered the city of York, exchanged hostages and were provisioned.<sup>[149]</sup> Hearing the news whilst in London, Harold Godwinson force-marched a second English army to Tadcaster by the night of the 24th, and after catching Harald Hardrada by surprise, on the morning of the 25 September, Harold achieved a total victory over the Scandinavian horde after a two-day-long engagement at the Battle of Stamford Bridge.<sup>[150]</sup> Harold gave quarter to the survivors allowing them to leave in 20 ships.<sup>[150]</sup>

## William of Normandy sails for England

Harold would have been celebrating his victory at Stamford Bridge on the night of 26/27 September 1066, while William of Normandy's invasion fleet set sail for England on the morning of 27 September 1066.<sup>[151]</sup> Harold marched his army back down to the south coast, where he met William's army, at a place now called Battle just outside Hastings.<sup>[152]</sup> Harold was killed when he fought and lost the Battle of Hastings on 14 October 1066.<sup>[153]</sup>

The Battle of Hastings virtually destroyed the Godwin dynasty. Harold and his brothers Gyrth and Leofwine were dead on the battlefield, as was their uncle Ælfwig, Abbot of Newminster. Tostig had been killed at Stamford Bridge. Wulfnoth was a hostage of William the Conqueror. The Godwin women who remained were either dead or childless.<sup>[154]</sup>

William marched on London. The city leaders surrendered the kingdom to him, and he was crowned at Westminster Abbey, Edward the Confessor's new church, on Christmas Day 1066.<sup>[155]</sup> It took William a further ten years to consolidate his kingdom, during which any opposition was suppressed ruthlessly; in a



Section of the Bayeux Tapestry showing Harold being killed at Hastings

particularly brutal process known as the Harrying of the North, William issued orders to lay waste the north and burn all the cattle, crops and farming equipment and to poison the earth.<sup>[156]</sup> According to Orderic Vitalis, the Anglo-Norman chronicler, over one hundred thousand people died of starvation.<sup>[157]</sup> Figures based on the returns for the Domesday Book estimate that the population of England in 1086 was about 2.25 million, so the figure of one hundred thousand deaths, due to starvation, would have been a huge proportion (about one in 20) of the population.<sup>[158]</sup>

By the time of William's death in 1087 it was estimated that only about 8 percent of the land was under Anglo-Saxon control.<sup>[155]</sup> Nearly all the Anglo-Saxon cathedrals and abbeys of any note had been demolished and replaced with Norman-style architecture by 1200.<sup>[159]</sup>

## See also

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- Anglo-Saxon architecture
- Anglo-Saxon monarchs
- Anglo-Saxon warfare
- Coinage in Anglo-Saxon England
- Kingdom of Cornwall
- Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England
- Staffordshire Hoard
- Timeline of Anglo-Saxon England

## Notes

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- a. Throughout this article Anglo-Saxon is used for Saxon, Angle, Jute or Frisian unless it is specific to a point being made; "Anglo-Saxon" is used when the culture is meant as opposed to any ethnicity.

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5. Jones. *The end of Roman Britain: Military Security*. pp. 164–68. The author discusses the failings of the Roman army in Britain and the reasons why they eventually left.
6. Jones. *The end of Roman Britain*. p. 246. "Roman Britain's death throes began on the last day of December 406 when Alans, Vandals, and Sueves crossed the Rhine and began the invasion of Gaul"
7. Morris. *The Age of Arthur*. pp. 56–62. Picts and Saxons.
8. Myres. *The English Settlements*. p. 14. Talking about Gildas references to the arrival of three keels (ships), "... this was the number of ship loads that led to the foedus or treaty settlement. Gildas also uses in their correct sense technical terms, *annona*, *epimenia*, *hospites*, which most likely derive from official documents relating to the billeting and supply of barbarian *foederati*."



9. Morris. *Age of Arthur*. p. 75. – Gildas: "... The federate complained that their monthly deliveries were inadequately paid..." – "All the greater towns fell to their enemy...."
10. Gildas. *The Ruin of Britain* II.20 . What Gildas had to say about the letter to Aëtius.
11. Dark. *Britain and the End of the Roman Empire*. p. 29. Referring to Gildas text about a letter: "The Britons...still felt it possible to appeal to Aetius, a Roman military official in Gaul in the mid-440s"
12. Dark. *Britain and the End of the Roman Empire*. p. 29. "Both Zosimus and Gildas refer to the 'Rescript of Honorius', a letter in which the Western Roman emperor told the British *civitas* to see to their own defence."
13. Esmonde Cleary. *The Ending of Roman Britain*. pp. 137–38. The author suggests that the "Rescript of Honorius" may have been for a place in southern Italy rather than Britain and that the chronology is wrong
14. Morris. *The Age of Arthur*. Chapter 6. *The War*
15. Gildas. *The Ruin of Britain*. II.26 – Mount Badon is referred to as Bath-Hill in this translation of Gildas text.
16. Myers, *The English Settlements*, Chapter 4: *The Romano British Background and the Saxon Shore*. Myers identifies incidence of German people in Britain during the Roman occupation.
17. Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, Book LX, p417. *While these events were happening in the city, Aulus Plautius, a senator of great renown, made a campaign against Britain; for a certain Bericus, who had been driven out of the island as a result of an uprising, had persuaded Claudius to send a force thither.*
18. Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, Book LX p. 419. *Thence the Britons retired to the river Thames at a point near where it empties into the ocean and at flood-tide forms a lake. This they easily crossed because they knew where the firm ground and the easy passages in this region were to be found; but the Romans in attempting to follow them were not so successful. However, the Germans swam across again and some others got over by a bridge a little way up-stream, after which they assailed the barbarians from several sides at once and cut down many of them.*
19. Forster et al. MtDNA Markers for Celtic and Germanic Language Areas in the British Isles (<http://www.geneticancestor.com/Forster2004Festschrift.pdf>) in Jones. *Traces of ancestry: studies in honour of Colin Renfrew*. pp. 99–111 Retrieved. 26 November 2011
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21. Alaric Hall, 'A gente Anglorum appellatur: The Evidence of Bede's Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum for the Replacement of Roman Names by English Ones During the Early Anglo-Saxon Period ([http://www.alarichall.org.uk/bede\\_and\\_place-names.pdf](http://www.alarichall.org.uk/bede_and_place-names.pdf))', in *Words in Dictionaries and History: Essays in Honour of R. W. McConchie*, ed. Olga Timofeeva and Tanja Säily, Terminology and Lexicography Research and Practice, 14 (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2011), pp. 219–31 (pp. 220–21).
22. Ward-Perkins. *The fall of Rome: and the end of civilisation* Particularly pp. 38–39
23. Welch, *Anglo-Saxon England*, Chapter 8: From Roman Britain to Anglo-Saxon England
24. Myers. *The English Settlements*, Chapter 5: *Saxons, Angles and Jutes on the Saxon Shore*
25. Jones. *The End of Roman Britain*. p. 71. – *...the repetitious entries for invading ships in the Chronicle (three ships of Hengest and Horsa; three ships of Aella; five ships of Cerdic and Cynric; two ships of Port; three ships of Stuf and Wihtgar), drawn from preliterate traditions including bogus eponyms and duplications, might be considered a poetic convention.*
26. Morris, *The Age of Arthur*, Ch.14: *Brittanny*
27. Bell-Fialkoff/ Bell: *The role of migration in the history of the Eurasian steppe*, p. 303. That is why many scholars still subscribe to the traditional view that combined archaeological, documentary and linguistic evidence suggests that considerable numbers of Anglo-Saxons settled in southern and eastern England.

28. Hunter-Blair, *Roman Britain and early England* Particularly Chapter 8: *The Age of Invasion*
29. Bede. *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* I.15.
30. Welch, *Anglo-Saxon England*. A complete analysis of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology. A discussion of where the settlers came from, based on a comparison of pottery with those found in the area of origin in Germany. Burial customs and types of building.
31. Myers, *The English Settlements*, p. 24; *Talking about Anglo-Saxon archaeology*: "...the distribution maps indicate in many areas the Anglo-Saxon shows a marked tendency to follow the Romano-British pattern, in a fashion which suggests a considerable degree of temporal as well as spatial overlap."
32. Heinrich Härke. *Ethnicity and Structures in Hines*. The Anglo-Saxons pp. 148–49
33. Attenborough. The laws of the earliest English kings. pp. 33–61 (<https://archive.org/stream/lawsofearliesten00grea#page/32/mode/2up>)
34. Jones, *The End of Roman Britain*, Ch. 1: Population and the Invasions; particularly pp. 11–12: "In contrast, some scholars shrink the numbers of the Anglo-Saxon invaders to a small, potent elite of only a few thousand invaders."
35. Welch, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 11: "Some archaeologists seem to believe that very few immigrants...were involved in the creation of Anglo-Saxon England... Gildas describes the settlement of Saxon mercenaries in the eastern part of the country, their reinforcement and subsequent successful rebellion...suggests more than just a handful of military adventurers. Bede felt secure in his belief that he was not of British descent... Further his list of three principle peoples who migrated here... is echoed in the archaeological record."
36. Bell, *The role of migration in the history of the Eurasian steppe*, p. 303: "As for migrants, three kinds of hypotheses have been advanced. Either they were a warrior elite, few in numbers but dominant by force of arms; or they were farmers mostly interested in finding good agricultural land; or they were refugees fleeing unsettled conditions in their homelands. Or they might have been any combination of these."
37. Pattison, 'Is it Necessary to Assume an Apartheid-like Social Structure in Early Anglo-Saxon England?' in *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* 2008 275, pp. 2423–29; and 'Integration vs Apartheid in Post-Roman Britain' in *Human Biology* 2011 83, pp. 715–33: "Opinions vary as to whether there was a substantial Germanic invasion or only a relatively small number arrived in Britain during this period. Contrary to the assumption of limited intermarriage made in the apartheid simulation, there is evidence that significant mixing of the British and Germanic peoples occurred, and that the early law codes, such as that of King Ine of Wessex, could have deliberately encouraged such mixing."
38. Gildas. The Ruin of Britain. II.25 -With their unnumbered vows they burden heaven, that they might not be brought to utter destruction, took arms under the conduct of Ambrosius Aurelianus, a modest man, who of all the Roman nation was then alone in the confusion of this troubled period by chance left alive.
39. Morris, *The Age of Arthur*, Chapter 16: English Conquest
40. Gildas. The Ruin of Britain I.1.
41. Snyder. *The Britons*. p. 85
42. Stenton. *Anglo-Saxon England*. p. 29.
43. Stenton. *Anglo-Saxon England*. p. 30.
44. Morris. *The Age of Arthur*. p. 299
45. Wood. *The Domesday Quest*. pp. 47–48
46. Greenway, *Historia Anglorum*, pp. lx–lxi. "The HA (*Historia Anglorum*) is the story of the unification of the English monarchy. To project such an interpretation required Henry (of Huntingdon) to exercise firm control over his material. One of the products of this control was his creation of the Heptarchy, which survived as a concept in historical writing into our own time".
47. Bede *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Tr. Shirley-Price, I.25

48. Charles-Edwards *After Rome: Nations and Kingdoms*, pp. 38–39
49. Snyder, *The Britons*, p. 176.
50. Bede, *History of the English*, II.20
51. Snyder, *The Britons*, p. 177
52. Snyder, *The Britons*, p. 178
53. Snyder, *The Britons*, p. 212
54. Snyder, *The Britons*, pp. 178–79
55. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 231
56. Charles Thomas *Christianity in Roman Britain to AD 500*, pp. 48–50: Saint Alban is discussed in detail, as when he lived and was martyred gives an indication of the state of Christianity in Roman Britain. Dates suggested for his martyrdom are 209 or 251–259 or c. 303.
57. Snyder, *The Britons*, pp. 106–07
58. Charles Thomas *Christianity in Roman Britain to AD 500*, p. 47
59. R. M. Errington *Roman Imperial Policy from Julian to Theodosius*, Chapter VIII. Theodosius
60. Jones, *The End of Roman Britain*, pp. 174–85: Religious Belief and Political loyalty. The author suggests the British were supporters of the Pelagian heresy, and that the numbers of Christians were higher than Gildas reports.
61. Snyder, *The Britons*, p. 105. *In 5th and 6th centuries Britons in large numbers adopted Christianity.*
62. Snyder, *The Britons*, pp. 116–25
63. Charles-Edwards, *After Rome: Society, Community and Identity*, p. 97
64. Charles-Edwards, *After Rome: Conversion to Christianity*, p. 132
65. Bede, *History of the English People*, I.22
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67. Charles-Edwards, *After Rome: Conversion to Christianity*, pp. 128–29
68. Snyder, *The Britons*, pp. 135–36
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70. Charles-Edwards, *After Rome: Conversion to Christianity*, pp. 124–39
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72. Bede, *History of the English People*, IV.13 and IV.16
73. Kirby, *The Church in Saxon Sussex in Brandon. The South Saxons.*, pp. 160–73. Kirby suggests that there would have been Christian communities already in Sussex. King Æthelwealh and his wife were already Christian, he having been baptised in Mercia. The pre-existing converts, in Sussex, would have been evangelised by the Irish church, and Bede and Eddius (Wilfred's biographer) were indifferent to the Irish Church. It was also politic to play up Wilfrid's role.
74. Charles-Edwards, *After Rome: Conversion to Christianity*, p. 126
75. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, Ch.1. particularly pp. 51–52
76. Mayr-Harting, *The coming of Christianity*, p. 146. Talking of Pope Gregory's policy he said that: *...the Anglo-Saxons should be led to Christianity step by step*. The old temples were now to be kept for Christian worship; Christian worship was to be accompanied with the old feasts of cattle.
77. Jennifer O'Reilly, *After Rome: The Art of Authority*, pp. 144–48
78. Bede, *History of the English People*, III.25 and III.26
79. Sawyer, *The Oxford illustrated history of Vikings*, p. 1.
80. Sawyer, *The Oxford illustrated history of Vikings*, pp. 2–3.
81. Standard English words which have a Scandinavian Etymology. Viking: "Northern pirate. Literally means creek dweller."

82. Starkey, *Monarchy*, Chapter 6: Vikings
83. *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 793. *This year came dreadful fore-warnings over the land of the Northumbrians, terrifying the people most woefully: these were immense sheets of light rushing through the air, and whirlwinds, and fiery dragons flying across the firmament. These tremendous tokens were soon followed by a great famine: and not long after, on the sixth day before the ides of January in the same year, the harrowing inroads of heathen men made lamentable havoc in the church of God in Holy-island (Lindisfarne), by rapine and slaughter.*
84. Starkey, *Monarchy*, p. 51
85. Starkey, *Monarchy* p. 65
86. Asser, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 84–85.
87. Asser, *Alfred the Great*, p. 22.
88. *Medieval Sourcebook: Alfred and Guthrum's Peace*
89. Wood, *The Domesday Quest*, Chapter 9: Domesday Roots. *The Viking Impact*
90. Starkey, *Monarchy*, p. 63
91. Horspool, *Alfred*, p. 102. A hide was somewhat like a tax – it was the number of men required to maintain and defend an area for the King. The Burghal Hideage defined the measurement as one hide being equivalent to one man. The hidage explains that *for the maintenance and defence of an acre's breadth of wall, sixteen hides are required.*
92. *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* 894.
93. Starkey, *Monarchy*, pp. 68–69.
94. Starkey, *Monarchy*, p. 64
95. *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* 891
96. *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 891–896
97. Horspool, "Why Alfred Burnt the Cakes", *The Last War*, pp. 104–10.
98. Horspool, "Why Alfred Burnt the Cakes", pp. 10–12
99. Asser, *Alfred the Great*, III pp. 121–60. Examples of King Alfred's *writings*
00. Yorke. *Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 123
01. *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 899
02. Starkey, *Monarchy*, p. 71
03. Welch, *Late Anglo-Saxon England* pp. 128–29
04. *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 937. The ASC gives a description of the build up to the battle and the battle itself. However, there is disagreement by historians on the accuracy of the date.
05. Starkey, *Monarchy*, p. 74
06. Starkey, *Monarchy*, p. 76
07. Woods, *The Domesday Quest*, pp. 107–08
08. The Viking Network: *Standard English words which have a Scandinavian Etymology.*
09. Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language* pp. 25–26.
10. Ordnance Survey: *Guide to Scandinavian origins of place names in Britain*
11. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 372-373
12. Starkey, *Monarchy*, p. 76. The modern ascription 'Unready' derives from the Anglo-Saxon word *unraed*, meaning "badly advised or counseled".
13. Malmesbury, *Chronicle of the kings of England*, pp. 165–66. In the year of our Lord's incarnation 979, Ethelred ... obtaining the kingdom, occupied rather than governed it, for thirty seven years. The career of his life is said to have been cruel in the beginning, wretched in the middle and disgraceful in the end.
14. Stenton. *Anglo Saxon England*. p. 375
15. Starkey, *Monarchy*, p. 79



16. Starkey, *Monarchy*, p. 80
17. Wood, *Domesday Quest*, p. 124
18. Campbell, *The Anglo Saxon State*, p. 160. "...it has to be accepted that early eleventh century kings could raise larger sums in taxation than could most of their medieval successors. The numismatic evidence for the scale of the economy is extremely powerful, partly because it demonstrates how very many coins were struck, and also because it provides strong indications for extensive foreign trade."
19. Wood, *Domesday Quest*, p. 125
20. Stenton. *Anglo-Saxon England*. p. 376
21. Stenton. *Anglo-Saxon England*. p. 377. The treaty was arranged.. by Archbishop Sigeric of Canterbury and Ælfric and Æthelweard, the ealdermen of the two West Saxon provinces.
22. Williams, *Aethelred the Unready*, p. 54
23. Williams, *Æthelred the Unready*, pp. 52–53.
24. Sawyer. *Illustrated History of Vikings*. p. 76
25. Wood, *In Search of the Dark Ages*, pp. 216–22
26. *Anglo Saxon Chronicle*, 1016
27. Starkey, *Monarchy*, p. 94.
28. *Anglo Saxon Chronicle*, 1017: ..before the calends of August the king gave an order to fetch him the widow of the other king, Ethelred, the daughter of Richard, to wife.
29. Brown. Chibnal. *Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman studies*. pp. 160–61
30. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 108–09
31. Lapidge. *Anglo-Saxon England*. pp. 229–30
32. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 161–62
33. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 230
34. Barlow, *The Godwins*, pp. 57–58
35. Barlow, *The Godwins*, pp. 64–65
36. Woods, *Dark Ages*, pp. 229–30
37. Barlow, *The Godwins*, pp. 83–85. The value of the Godwins holdings can be discerned from the Domesday Book.
38. Barlow, *The Godwins*, pp. 116–23
39. *Anglo Saxon Chronicle*, 1065 AD
40. Starkey, *Monarchy* p. 119
41. Starkey, *Monarchy*, p. 120
42. *Anglo Saxon Chronicle*. MS C. 1066.
43. Woods, *Dark Ages*, pp. 233–38
44. Barlow, *The Godwins*, "Chapter 5: The Lull Before the Storm".
45. Vitalis. *The Ecclesiastical history of England and Normandy*. Volume i. Bk. III Ch. 11. pp. 461–64 65
46. Barlow, *The Godwins*, pp. 134–35.
47. *Anglo Saxon Chronicle*. MS D. 1066.
48. Barlow, *The Godwins*, p. 138
49. Barlow, *The Godwins*, pp. 136–137
50. Barlow, *The Godwins*, pp. 137–38
51. Woods, *Dark Ages*, pp. 238–40
52. Barlow, *The Godwins*, "Chapter 7: The Collapse of the Dynasty".
53. Woods, *Dark Ages*, p. 240.
54. Barlow, *The Godwins*, p. 156.

55. Woods, *Dark Ages*, pp. 248–49
56. Starkey. *Monarchy*. pp. 138–39
57. Vitalis. *The ecclesiastical history*. p. 28 *His camps were scattered over a surface of one hundred miles numbers of the insurgents fell beneath his vengeful sword he levelled their places of shelter to the ground wasted their lands and burnt their dwellings with all they contained. Never did William commit so much cruelty, to his lasting disgrace, he yielded to his worst impulse and set no bounds to his fury condemning the innocent and the guilty to a common fate. In the fulness of his wrath he ordered the corn and cattle with the implements of husbandry and every sort of provisions to be collected in heaps and set on fire till the whole was consumed and thus destroyed at once all that could serve for the support of life in the whole country lying beyond the Humber There followed consequently so great a scarcity in England in the ensuing years and severe famine involved the innocent and unarmed population in so much misery that in a Christian nation more than a hundred thousand souls of both sexes and all ages perished..*
58. Bartlett. *England under the Normans*. pp. 290–92
59. Wood. *The Domesday Quest*. p. 141

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